

Journey

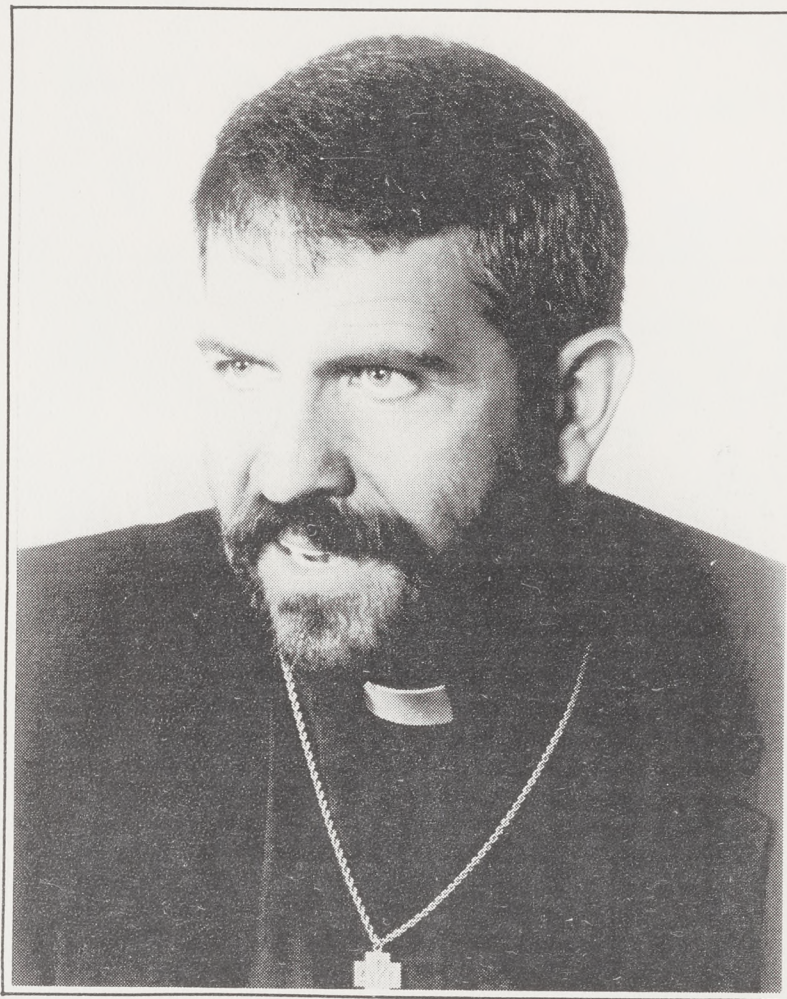
The Christian News Magazine of the
Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community Churches



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NEVER ASK PERMISSION



By Steve Warren

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Troy Perry was a gay activist before the Stonewall rebellion and, God willing, he'll still be one after the AIDS crisis has passed. By that time, his power base may have shifted from the spiritual to the political arena.

"I know anytime I wanted to translate 'my following' into a political base, I could," he says in response to a like-worded question. "The time has not been right. I do a lot of prayer, and I have to wait until the right moment. But if -- when that time comes, and it will, I'll hit it hard on."

"I happen to be a registered Democrat, but I've learned over the years I have friends in both parties," Perry says, explaining why he avoids partisan politics as much as possible.

The Rev. Elder Dr. Troy D. Perry, to use his earned, elective, and honorary title, founded the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) in his Huntington Park, California, living room on October 6, 1968.

"I didn't view it as a political act at the time," he laughs, "BUT EVERYBODY ELSE DOES. I was just a preacher who had been called to the ministry, and even when I took out my ad (in the *Advocate*, for the first service) it was a political act, because I gave my home address. My roommate, Willie Smith, just went off the deep end. He said, 'How crazy can you be? You mean you've taken out an ad in a gay newspaper and gave our home address? The police are gonna come in and raid it right off the bat!'"

"But I did it out of ignorance. I didn't know that you couldn't do things like that. I was starting a church and was thinking like a preacher -- not even a gay preacher, but just a preacher -- and my thinking was, the way you've got to do it is to let people know where you're at."

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UFMCC CONGREGATIONS AROUND THE WORLD



Children of a UFMCC Congregation in Enugu, Nigeria

UFMCC ESTABLISHES CLINIC IN NIGERIA

BY Chris Messenger

Elder Jean White, formerly a midwife and state registered nurse, and Chris Messenger a social worker and a member of MCC London recently visited some of our Nigerian Metropolitan Community Churches with the aim of establishing a health clinic in Ezinachi with funds from UFMCC.

Nigeria has about 95 million people, belonging to 250 ethnic groups, but with three peoples numerically stronger than the rest-- the Hausa of the North, the Ibo of the southeast and the Yoruba of the Southwest. One of the densest concentrations of people in Nigeria is in the Ibo heartland that was the focus of breakaway Biafra, and it was here that we spent two weeks visiting some of our MCC Churches in Imo State and furthering the establishment of a basic health clinic for the peoples around Ezinachi, a small village a couple of hours drive from Enugu where our co-ordinator of the Nigerian churches, The Rev. Silvanus Maduka and his family lives.

Funds for the setting up of a health clinic had been provided through the generosity of UFMCC congregations worldwide, via the work of the executive secretary for World Church Extension, The Reverend Elder Jean White. Fortunately, Jean had visited our Nigerian Churches 5 years ago so was able to prepare us for Lagos, and our arrival at Murtala Muhammed Airport where one's bargaining and survival skills are quickly put to the test!

We had been led to expect that a suitable clinic building was almost ready

to be used; that it just needed a coat of paint and a final clean-up and then official approval from the local health authority. We had a rude awakening when we found the building was only half completed and we had to start from scratch. Finding suitable clinic buildings is not easy in rural Nigeria, but our need was quickly met when the owner of what was probably the largest and most substantial dwelling in the area, "le chateau," offered us the use of some of his rooms for a reasonable rent. In the interim we held an almost daily clinic in a little local hut. The other days were spent recruiting a Nigerian nurse, obtaining the services of a Nigerian doctor to supervise the work, and following through on the bureaucratic processes to register the clinic as well as visiting some of our MCC churches in Ntighe and Mbawsi.

The climate was dry and hot and a red dust blew everywhere. The local children and villagers were most welcoming and friendly and the worship services organized by The Rev. Maduka showed, that like most congregations within UFMCC, our Nigerian brothers and sisters were no exception when it came to a love of singing.

Jean and I never quite got used to the

numbers of people that were compressed into the vehicles which transported us, usually at breakneck speeds, over the potholes and dusty trails, occasionally stopping at road blocks operated by surly-looking military personnel armed with machine guns. Tales of travellers being stopped and murdered for their belongings were quite commonplace and Rev. Maduka has been waylaid and robbed on several occasions.

Corruption and economic mismanagement are rife and this has led to a large National debt which the military council is trying to clear, with minimal success. The country is rich in oil and other minerals but the profits are not experienced by the general population who, in the main, endure poverty and poor health care, with drugs in short supply and very expensive. Reverend Maduka was not unduly concerned about the threat of "Slims Disease" (A.I.D.S.) in his community. Why should he be when so many of his people die from common illnesses which hardly rate a mention in Europe or in the USA? Hopefully, the MCC clinic in Ezinachi will help reduce some of the unnecessary suffering and death for the local people, especially among under-fives.

A BOOK REVIEW

ELSA: I COME WITH MY SONGS

In June of 1986, San Francisco and Bay area newspapers carried lengthy obituaries commemorating the passing of a poet named Elsa Gidlow. During her life, Gidlow was not widely known outside the San Francisco area where she made her home for many years before her death at age eighty-seven. Her final literary work was her autobiography, a book entitled **Elsa: I Come With My Songs**. Her death followed closely upon the heels of the publication, as though the effort of writing her fascinating story earned her a rest.

Elsa Gidlow was born to a very conventional lower middle-class English family which immigrated to Canada when she was a child of six. In the early twentieth century, life on the rural frontiers of Canada was bleak, violent, marginal and a voracious consumer of the lives of women. Child-bearing deaths took many women and those who survived the annual pregnancies lived in squalor, fear and subject to the rule of men whose only necessary qualification was gender.

At a very early age, despite her

By Elsa Gidlow, Booklegger Press, San Francisco, 1986. 422 pages, \$10.95 in paperback, available at Liberty Books in Austin, Texas.

Review by Tom Doyal

ignorance of any other society, young Elsa sensed the cruelty and injustice of her world. Her own father was a petty tyrant who ate better food than his wife and children, drank to the detriment of the household and saw no injustice in his favored station. In spite of the efforts of the family to support him in his Canadian business ventures, the family experienced years of grinding poverty due to his failures.

The little girl bore these hardships nurtured by her internal life, rich in imagination, sharp in analysis of her confining world and cadenced by unbidden poetry. As Gidlow became a woman she realized her opposition to the general scheme of things was not based upon a sense of justice alone. She knew that her erotic life had at its center other women. Soon her poems celebrated women. As soon as she knew the words for it, she celebrated lesbians in her writing.

From this impoverished beginning, Gidlow set out to become a whole, powerful person. In 1929 she published a volume of lesbian poetry in Chicago,

On A Gray Thread. At that time, the general public was so ignorant of sapphic love that there was no outcry and, in time, the printing sold out.

Throughout her life, Elsa Gidlow met the mundane demands of the world with courage and perseverance. She carved out a career as a working journalist at a time when women were de facto denied admission to most professions. She remained devoted to her poetic muse and true to the demands of that muse. In time, she came to see her role in this life so clearly that the vision enabled her "to live life without fear of consequences."

Gidlow's power shows in the book's cover photo of a wise, strong and loving crone, peering, at age eighty-seven, into the camera with the intensity of a child. Late in her life, Gidlow referred to herself as a poet/warrior. Read her fascinating story and learn to become a poet/warrior yourself.

DIALOGUE CONTINUES WITH NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

When the membership application of the UFMCC to the National Council of Churches of Christ was finally considered by its Governing Board, intense controversy prompted the ecumenical body of 32 Christian denominations to postpone the action indefinitely.

They did, however, concede that the disagreement surrounding homosexuality in scripture, church structure (ec-

clesiology) and human sexuality warranted further discussion and study. Consequently, the NCCC established a process "whereby the NCCC and the UFMCC can remain in study and conversation together."

Continuing dialogue was planned in the form of three 'Consultations'. The first, held in New Orleans on May 23-24, 1986, addressed the issue of

homosexuality and scriptural interpretation. The second consultation was conducted in Chicago during November 7-8, 1986. The focus of Consultation II was human sexuality and Christian ethics. The third consultation, dealing with ecclesiology and Christian unity was scheduled for May 15-16, 1987, but has been postponed until September 19, 1987.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CONSULTATION II COMPLETED

The following report on Consultation II was presented to the NCCC Governing Board by David Sommers, a youth delegate and Governing Board member representing the Moravian Church. Sommers is currently a seminary student preparing for the ordained ministry of his denomination. He is also a member of the Steering Committee for the UFMCC-NCCC Consultations.

Roman Catholic theologian Daniel Maguire once said that there are two modern-day evils in the Church with which we must be impatient: irrelevant religion and divisive religion. Our religion is irrelevant when we neither speak to society as it is nor speak as God intends. And our religion becomes divisive when we make rigid distinctions to the point of tearing each other down.

Last November's dialogue between delegates of the UFMCC and the NCCC demonstrated that the Church can be both relevant and inclusive as it addresses complex issues surrounding human sexuality. The purpose of our consultation, the second in a series of three, was designed "to expand vocabulary, understanding, and appreciation related to the science and ethics of human sexuality and relationships." Altogether 30 delegates from the UFMCC and the NCCC participated in the event. I represented the NCCC as a youth delegate of the Moravian Church.

The format of the dialogue was quite informal. After hearing presentations by our guest lecturers, Dan Maguire (Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University) and The Rev. Sherre Boothman (Dean of Samaritan College in Los Angeles, CA) we responded through small-group table discussions. We came to listen to one another and to dialogue over both the content of the presentations and our personal reactions and insights to

these presentations. I found that this style of "heart-to-heart" dialogue really opened doors for building trust and openness. No longer were the ethics of sexuality mere abstract concepts, subject to intellectual debate. Instead, we talked out of personal and shared experience.

Our guest speakers focused not so much upon the issue of homosexuality. Rather, they challenged us to reflect upon the wider dimensions of human sexuality. For example, Dan Maguire left us this golden nugget of an insight: "The noun of marriage is relationship, the adjective is sexual. But what really unites a couple is friendship." And what are the marks of friendship that undergird marriage? First (and I paraphrase Maguire) friendship includes respect. That is friendship affirms the other person as one made in God's image. Second, a sense of humor goes a long way in building friendship. Someone once said, "If you want to be serious, be serious about your neck tie. But with death, sex, or religion you need to laugh or you will go mad." Laughter signals the divine-- it is a gift, a talent. Third and finally, friendship love respects the other person's space. True union differentiates. After all, each person is a special word spoken by God.

In a very real way, I think that many delegates at the consultation experienced these three marks of friendship with one another as we dialogued openly. A sense

of humor helped immensely to facilitate discussion. After all, it isn't every day that one discusses sexuality in so open a manner. Furthermore, as we dialogued we came to appreciate each delegate's uniqueness in God's image, even if we remained unresolved and even at odds over the issue of homosexuality.

Rev. Boothman challenged us to reflect upon what images we have been taught make for the "ideal man" and "ideal woman" and of the stereotypes of gay men and of lesbians. Boothman urged us to "think about how we are taught to be who we are and about what's expected of us." We also discussed how Misogyny -- what Boothman defined as the trivializing or hatred of what we understand as being feminine or of woman-- is related to homophobia.

By the end of the consultation a number of questions arose among the participants. For example, what good news does the church have for Gays? -- And will the Church be bold enough to proclaim that good news? Another question with which we struggled was: if creation is not singularly heterosexual, how does this change our theology? In the end, our consultation raised more questions than gave answers. "And perhaps this is good," one participant declared.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CONSULTATION III CANCELED



Immediately prior to Consultation III, set for May 15-16 in Kansas City, the UFMCC was notified that the consultation was canceled because only six NCCC Governing Board members planned to participate.

The following remarks to the NCCC Governing Board were presented by The Rev. Elder Donald Eastman on behalf of the UFMCC.

During the NCCC Kansas City meeting, Consultation III was rescheduled for September 19, 1987, in Atlanta, Georgia.

We expect to take you at your word. If you say you are committed to further conversation and study of the issues, we have every right to expect your actions to prove this true. But, at the moment, such is not the case.

Your action of non-participation in this process says that, once again you want us to become party to your silence. Silence is no stranger to us. Often we have been severed from communication with our families and friends, or excommunicated by our churches. We would be acceptable only if we could conceal our true identity or remain quiet about ourselves.

But we have learned that silence is aggression. Silence perpetuates ignorance; ignorance breeds fear and fear incites violence.

It is precisely this kind of silence that leads to the internalized violence suffered by those who try to live a lie, or the horizontal violence so characteristic of oppressed minorities, or the blatant, brutal overt violence increasing in our gay and lesbian communities.

It has been said that "truth is not only violated by falsehood; it is outraged by silence."

We also must acknowledge that this consultation process is not devoid of context. At this time the UFMCC finds itself in the vortex of one of history's greatest tragedies: the world-wide A.I.D.S.

epidemic. Our communities are overwhelmed by grief and fear. Our clergy and congregations are overloaded with the monumental needs for ministry in this crisis.

As we all face this crisis one fact remains: *widespread alienation of gays and lesbians from the Christian Church continues to be the rule; and the UFMCC continues to be an exception.*

Any task force you create or any ministry to persons with A.I.D.S. you attempt will occur in this context of alienation. Recently in a Southern California city, the mayor's son died of A.I.D.S. Although they were prominent members of a local church, the family turned to a nearby Metropolitan Community Church for prayer and support. The mayor's wife later spoke to the local ministerial association, saying she felt helpless and hopeless because she knew she could not turn to her pastor or talk to friends in her church.

The very issues we study and discuss in these consultations are issues that influence such alienation. The mutual commitment and cooperation of the UFMCC and member communions of the NCCC to ongoing dialogue offers potential for healing and hope in our times.

But to choose silence and ignore alienation will preempt the Christian

Church's effective ministry in what well may be the greatest plague in history. It will be very difficult to convince people you care for them when they are sick if you won't talk to them while they are well.

We of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, wish to express gratitude to those communions and Governing Board members who have participated in the process of the first two consultations.

In the first consultation, a total of 17 Governing Board members representing eleven communions participated. In the second consultation, twelve Governing Board members representing eight communions participated. A total of fourteen NCCC member communions have been represented in the process to date.

In our view, the process has been a good one, and the dialogue has been helpful. We wish that many more of you would have participated. On Thursday of this past week, the UFMCC was notified that the third consultation scheduled for this week had been canceled due to lack of committed participation by NCCC Governing Board members.

In view of this development, and in view of the fact that more than half of the NCCC member communions have chosen not to participate in prior consultations, we must protest the inadequacy of your corporate action.

A BOOK REVIEW

SACRAMENT OF SEXUALITY: THE SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX

By Morton Kelsey & Barbara Kelsey, Amity House (106 Newport Bridge Rd.,
Warwick, RI 01090), 1986, \$9.95 U.S.

Review by Jeffery Pulling

This book is a mixed-bag. Parts of it are brilliantly and profoundly done, and other parts are inaccurate and unfair portrayals of gay and lesbian people.

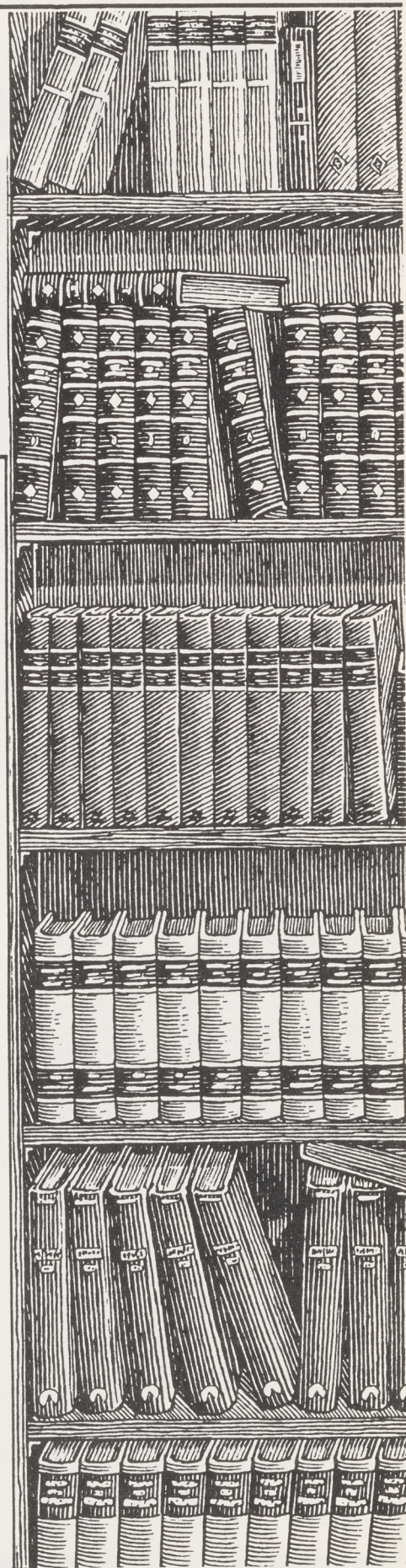
The authors are Jungian counselors (and he an Episcopal priest). Their Jungian approach is both the strength and the weakness of the book. The authors have strong feminist convictions and explain their growth into this awareness through their individual life journeys, their relationship together, and their counseling (particularly dealing with self affirmation and abuse). Their awareness of femininity and masculinity (anima and animus) in every individual helps them to insightfully present the varieties of heterosexualities, homosexualities and bisexualities; the biological and cultural development of gender and sexual identity; the value and danger of celibacy; and sexual attitudes in the Bible and in Christian history.

The part of the book that was most helpful to me personally was their discussion of the development of human civilization from matrilinear to patriarchal and how that has affected religion, particularly Judaism/Christianity. This presentation is done very matter-of-factly and in a non-threatening way. It touched my rational, male-conditioned mind in a way that feminist polemic never could. Also very helpful to me personally was their discussion of male projections onto God (individuated autonomy, radical otherness, and omnipotence).

Unfortunately, this book falls short when it starts to deal specifically with homosexualities. Because of their Jungian understanding of men and women both having anima and animus and thus seeking the counterpart in other persons, they can only see same-gender

orientation as an arrested stage of development. They are very open to and non-judgmental about homosexual relations, but by their definition heterosexuality is preferable to (better than?) homosexuality. It seems that they have gone beyond most of their homophobia, but they are still heterosexist. They do not seem to notice that gay and lesbian people who have had to struggle through to self-affirmation have had to consciously deal with both anima and animus in themselves and are thus probably better balanced in femininity-masculinity than other people are. Most of their personal knowledge of same-gender orientation (and most of the examples they give) seem related to their counseling of men in the priesthood or religious orders who are troubled and struggling. They need more exposure to lesbians in general and to healthy, self-affirming gay men. Their psychological theories about the development of a same-gender orientation would have to be changed if they dealt with women "coming out" later in life. Their disparaging comments about "recreational" sex would be helped by communication with long-term, stable couples who do not practice monogamy (and by Norman Pittenger's distinctions of good, better, and best for relational sex). They are confused about sadomasochism; their equation of S&M, violence, and rape is simply wrong. They also give misinformation about A.I.D.S. and anal intercourse because they show no awareness of safe sex practices.

This book by the Kelseys could be a very helpful resource for FFO and for other sexuality studies in the UFMCC. Its short-comings, however, must be openly recognized and dealt with.



NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

San Francisco Homosexuals Plan Demonstrations Against Pope

NEW YORK (RNS)-- San Francisco's homosexual community is up in arms over Pope John Paul II's planned visit in September and is planning to greet him with angry demonstrations.

"The Pope has become possibly the most visible symbol in the world of oppression to gays and lesbians and of homophobia," said Richmond Young, chairman of the Political Action Committee of the Alice B. Toklas Lesbian-Gay Democratic Club. He told the **Los Angeles Times** that "having him here in San Francisco is like waving a red flag in front of a bull."

John Wahl, a member of the Stonewall Gay Democratic Club who is chairing a coalition of eight groups planning to demonstrate against the papal visit, said, "We are preparing a significant, strong, even unforgettable reception for what really is a foreign prince coming to our country to preach against the freedoms many of us have fought for many years to achieve."

The Reverend Robert Cromeey, rector

of Trinity Episcopal Church, joined with 50 of his parishioners and the church's board of directors in a petition to San Francisco Mayor Diane Feinstein asking that the papal visit be canceled because it could "cause greater divisions between the homosexual and heterosexual communities in San Francisco."

Bill Strawn, a spokesman for the mayor, said that Ms. Feinstein had written to Father Cromeey that she "essentially disagreed completely" with his position. "I feel San Francisco is a city of great tolerance," Mr. Strawn quoted the mayor's letter as saying. "No one ideal or religion, in my view, should be denied to be heard."

Episcopal Bishop William Swing of San Francisco has also dissociated himself from Father Cromeey's position. He said that although he personally disagrees with many of the Pope's positions on homosexuality, he thought most Episcopalians would be "quite excited" about the papal visit.

A spokesman for the San Francisco

chapter of Dignity, a support group for homosexual Catholics, said that although the organization is "outraged" at the Vatican's recently issued guidelines for dealing with homosexuality, the group has no plans to protest the papal visit.

"We want to be seen as the loyal opposition," the spokesman told the **Times**. "But we will issue a vigorous and creative public statement during the Pope's stay in San Francisco offering him a prophetic Christian witness... and explaining our dissatisfaction with the papal statement against homosexuality."

The Dignity spokesman told the newspaper he did not want to be identified because "I work for a church institution and could lose my job."

Mr. Wahl said his coalition, known as the Papal Visit Task Force, has discussed such plans as demonstrations, a public forum on "the history of gay oppression and the role of organized religion in oppressing homosexuals," and "alternative religious services" featuring leaders who are sympathetic to gays.



EVANGELICALS CHIDED FOR LACK OF COMPASSION

Chicago (RNS) -- During a conference dedicated to careers and the workplace, a noted Baptist scholar left the main agenda to criticize evangelicals for a lack of compassion, particularly, he said, in their lack of response to the A.I.D.S. crisis.

"We may be theologically sound, but we in the church of Jesus Christ have been devoid of the kind of compassion that was evident in Jesus Christ," said Dr. Anthony Campolo, an ordained Baptist minister and chairman of the department of sociology and youth ministries at Eastern College in St. Davids, PA.

Dr. Campolo was speaking to 1,600 students and professionals gathered for the opening session of "Marketplace

'86." The event, sponsored by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, focused on career goals and a Christian perspective on work in the marketplace.

But Dr. Campolo stressed a broader theme in his opening address. He was critical of the churches' lack of imitation of Jesus in response to A.I.D.S. victims. "For what are A.I.D.S. victims if they are not the new lepers?" he asked.

"I've heard evangelicals say it's a curse of God. God gives disease for that sin. Well, if God gave a death-creating disease to everybody who sinned, we'd all be in the hospital," the sociologist asserted.

Further, Dr. Campolo said he has yet

to see an evangelical church "invaded by compassion," a church with the capacity "to have its heart broken by the things that broke the heart of Jesus Christ." He charged that "if you don't care about the homosexual, the A.I.D.S. victim, the lepers of today's society, then you're not a Christian."

"Jesus Christ came to do more than make us pious. He came to make us care about the things he cares about," Dr. Campolo said.

Most of the conference, however, dealt with careers and career choices and how to bring a Christian perspective to fields ranging from social work to banking and the business world.

VICE-PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH, IN SWITCH, LASHES OUT AT NEW RIGHT LACK OF TOLERANCE

By William Bole, Religious News Service Washington Writer

Washington (RNS) Vice-President George Bush, who has been an enthusiastic booster of conservative Christian political activism, delivered a surprise attack here on fundamentalist attempts to "dictate their own interpretation of morality on the rest of society."

Just before Mr. Bush's remarks before a major gathering of evangelical Protestants, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop reproached them for letting their views on homosexuality get in the way of efforts to educate the public about the deadly disease A.I.D.S..

The two speeches came at the 44th annual convention of National Religious Broadcasters, an evangelical association of more than 1,200 religious radio and television broadcasters. At past meetings, all held in Washington, both President Reagan and Mr. Bush have lavished unqualified praise on the largely fundamentalist movement known as the religious New Right.

For the first time, however, administration officials used their highly visible forums at NRB to chide the religious right.

Mr. Bush's criticism apparently was an attempt to place some distance between himself and the movement. In a fairly well-received address the vice president, a 1988 Republican presidential hopeful, began by welcoming the political awakening of conservative Christians. He attacked liberals who, he charged, have sought to chill the New Right's freedom to influence the nation.

But Mr. Bush went on to criticize religious activists who have used that freedom to spread intolerance.

"I raise this as a friend who believes deeply in your involvement," he said in prefacing his comments before more than 4,000 religious broadcasters. "Initially,

you sought freedom. In the process, you gained power. And with power, a small minority now wants control," he declared.

"There are those who would seek to impose their will and dictate their interpretation of morality on the rest of society," said the vice-president. "There are those who would forget the need for tolerance."

Mr. Bush specifically referred to campaigns by fundamentalists against school textbooks deemed offensive to Christians.

"There is no reason **Huckleberry Finn** should be banned from the schools of this country. There is no reason **The Diary of Ann Frank** should not be read," he said, citing two classics which recently came under attack by fundamentalist parents in Tennessee.

Speaking earlier at the same afternoon session, Dr. Koop launched a counter-offensive against religious conservatives who have bitterly opposed his A.I.D.S. education campaign.

In October, the surgeon general issued a report declaring A.I.D.S., A SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE THAT MOSTLY AFFECTS HOMOSEXUALS, A NATIONAL HEALTH EMERGENCY. Recommended in the report, along with other preventative measures, were sex education in schools and use of condoms during sexual intercourse.

Without mentioning names, Dr. Koop said he has been accused, since issuing the report, of "sponsoring homosexually-oriented curricula, teaching buggery in the 3rd grade, and providing condoms to 8-year olds."

Dr. Koop said disapproval of homosexual activity is behind the resistance to his report. But he warned

the audience that A.I.D.S. is increasingly striking heterosexual men and women as well as homosexuals, and that evangelicals should join, rather than thwart, A.I.D.S. education projects.

"If you regard homosexual behavior as a sin, please remember that one of your fundamental teachings has been to separate the sin from the sinner," he said in calling on them to "show the compassion of Christ" in responding to the A.I.D.S. crisis. "You may hate the sin, but you are to love the sinner."

For Mr. Bush, the speech here was quite a turnaround from his past appearances before evangelical gatherings. He has been widely accused of pandering to the religious right in his attempts to win its support for his all-but-announced run for president.

The vice president is an Episcopalian who had a reputation as a moderate-to-liberal Republican before becoming Mr. Reagan's running mate in 1980. He has actively courted conservative evangelicals for more than a year and, with some exceptions, come up with little solid support.

Mr. Bush drew cordial applause despite taking exception with some fundamentalist campaigns, but reactions to his address were mixed. Ed McAteer of the conservative organization, Religious Roundtable, said, "He was absolutely dead wrong. That type of thinking makes me reticent about giving him my support."

But Robert Dugan, Washington director of the National Association of Evangelicals, said the vice president voiced valid concerns about overzealousness among conservative Christian activists. He added that Mr. Bush was wisely trying to send out the message that "he's not in the hip pocket of the evangelical movement."

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

Priests With A.I.D.S. Pose Challenge To U.S. Catholic Community

New York (RNS) Roman Catholic priests are dying of A.I.D.S. In the atmosphere of shock that surrounds all aspects of the A.I.D.S. crisis, that announcement is particularly stunning because Catholic priests are supposed to be celibate.

Although sexual activity among the ranks of Catholic clergy may not be the shocking story it once was, the revelation that priests are dying of A.I.D.S. contracted through homosexual encounters has forced a certain amount of open discussion of homosexual priests, an issue that previously had been talked about only in hushed tones.

Ever since the liberal independent National Catholic Reporter reported last December that it had confirmed that 12 priests have died from A.I.D.S., the topic has been widely written about in the secular press and debated by left and right.

As the reports continue to accumulate, some have charged that the Catholic Church has been less than compassionate in its treatment of priests who become afflicted with acquired immune deficiency syndrome, often transmitted through homosexual encounters. On the other side, church conservatives have leveled harsh criticism at the newspaper coverage, which they view as anti-Catholic.

Columnist Joseph Sobran, writing in the conservative Catholic weekly, **The Wanderer**, blasted a story in **The Washington Post** which he said implied "that the church isn't according enough compassion to its own sodomites."

"Of course the Catholic Church discriminates against sodomites," Mr. Sobran continued. "It also discriminates against fornicators. The A.I.D.S. crisis hasn't shocked it into changing its position on the one, any more than syphilis shocked it into changing on the other."

The **Catholic Eye**, a newsletter of the conservative National Committee of Catholic Laymen, asked its readers, "Is your local paper full of Priests with A.I.D.S.' stories?"

The point of the coverage, said the newsletter, "is to attack Roman Catholic sexual morality -- which would prevent A.I.D.S.! -- and show the church's hard-heartedness to A.I.D.S. victims."

Regardless of the criticism the story continues to develop, raising for the church and the question of how to deal with the twin issues of homosexuality and sexual activity among its clergy.

Incidents of priests with A.I.D.S. also are being reported outside the large urban areas such as New York where the disease is most prevalent. In early February, the St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press Dispatch, in a copyrighted article, reported the death of a Minnesota Catholic priest from A.I.D.S. The paper said the clergyman died in late 1986 "after isolating himself from the church and concealing his lifestyle and illness from all but a few close friends."

Three other Minnesota priests are known to have A.I.D.S.-related symptoms, said the paper, and at least two out-of-state priests have gone to Minnesota for treatment of the disease. In addition, it said, several Catholic clergy around the state have tested positive for A.I.D.S.

The newspaper quoted a local unidentified A.I.D.S. expert as saying priests with A.I.D.S. constitute "one of the most closeted, paranoid groups we know of. It's the single most underground problem with A.I.D.S. in the country."

"What A.I.D.S. has done is pointed out that priests are human like anybody else," said Chuck Ceronsky, chairman of the pastoral health care commission for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minnesota and supervisor of the archdiocese's A.I.D.S. ministry.

Mr. Ceronsky told the paper that the priest who died was evicted from his rectory when he became ill. The paper said, however, that was "shunned by one priest's home diocese of Crookston, Minn., offered whatever support the priest wanted."

The Chicago Tribune reported that five Roman Catholic clerics-- two priests and three brothers-- had died of A.I.D.S.

there in recent months. Brother Rick Garcia, Midwest Coordinator of the Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights, told the paper he knew of several other priests and brothers in Chicago who had A.I.D.S.

Exactly how many of the 57,000 Roman Catholic clergy in the United States are homosexual and how many have A.I.D.S. is unknown.

According to a report in the **National Catholic Reporter**, "Homosexual clergy tend to place the figure (of homosexual priests) at 50 percent or higher...Allowing for the unique shifts in Catholic clerical life, and the attrition rate of heterosexual priests, the percentage of homosexual clergymen is conservatively estimated at 16-26 percent, according to a reliable secular researcher."

"Until I came into vocation work, I had little idea that the number of gay priests was so high," The Rev. Frederick Daley of Syracuse, New York, recently told **The Washington Post**. Father Daley, vocation director for the Diocese of Syracuse, added, "I really believe that most priests have committed themselves to celibacy, but there's a significant number who have not."

Even if the lowest estimates are accepted, many inside and outside the church say the A.I.D.S. crisis among priests could greatly increase over the next few years.

In the same **Post** article, Dr. David McEwan, founder of Hawaii's A.I.D.S. Task Force, said, "A.I.D.S. is going to profoundly affect the Catholic religious community in 1987. Three (priests who test positive) is not a lot but if that's true in every city in the country that's not a small number."

The Rev. Richard Hynes, director of the Chicago-based National Federation of Priests Councils, said, "I think it's going to be a significant issue in the church. I don't know about numbers, but if it happens to one or 10 or 100 priests or brothers, it's important to those people. A.I.D.S. is a problem of society and it has some effect within the clergy, so it has to be confronted and dealt with."

When the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission (FFO) of UFMCC, convened its 1986 meeting at MCC Dallas, Texas, A.I.D.S. was a top priority on the agenda. The theological commission of MCC decided to spend a full day discussing how A.I.D.S. is affecting our work as a commission and our lives as gay and lesbian Christians. The commission is comprised of elected lay and clergy representatives from each MCC district, plus Hispanic and Black representatives, and over 25 people were present from Denmark, Canada and the United States. The meeting represented both a genuine cross section of MCC, and FFO's official response to the National Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission, which is using this information as part of a case study on "A.I.D.S., Homophobia and the Church" commissioned by its Unity of the Church and Renewal of Human Community working group.

At the meeting, a brief poll was taken of the levels of A.I.D.S. involvement in the group, including plans for the Fall "A.I.D.S. Vigil of Prayer," participation in FFO's Lenten study series on A.I.D.S., "Do Not Fear, Only Believe," local congregational A.I.D.S. ministry, personal A.I.D.S. ministry, and involvement with the disease. Involvement was extremely high (75-80%) with three persons working fulltime in A.I.D.S. ministry and two persons with spouses diagnosed with A.I.D.S. The commission spent time in small groups, sharing personal experiences and answering the four questions that follow. (These questions were proposed by the National Council Faith and Order Study, based on an action-reflection model, and adapted for FFO's use.) Each group reported to the whole on their discussion, and general consensus statements were drawn up for each question. The chair then transformed these notes into the text that appears here, in abbreviated form:

The overall reaction of the group was empowerment and excitement. Several people expressed appreciation for this process as helping us as a commission to refocus our priorities and reflect on our growth. The experience was not only intellectual, but profoundly emotional and spiritual serving to unify the commission

for the remainder of the meeting-- and beyond! A local congregation might benefit from discussing these same questions!

1. What are the crucial issues for human renewal that FFO was designed to address and how have these changed in response to A.I.D.S.?

FFO was formed around the following issues: a) Recognition of a split between mind and body, spirituality and sexuality, in our culture and in Christianity, and a need to heal that brokenness in embodied wholeness, the "embodiment" of God in ALL of us-- mind, body and spirit. b) Growth toward self-acceptance as gays and lesbians, toward a sex positive attitude in the face of culture's sex negativity and homophobia (the fear of homosexuality). c) The goal of building consensus for UFMCC's statement of faith, from an ecumenical perspective. d) Empowering the laity in a commission of lay-clergy parity, as "the priesthood of all believers" where "we are all theologians."

Changes in these issues in response to A.I.D.S. have primarily been to make them much more intense, more real, more personal. Issues of sexuality, of embodiment, of homophobia are all heightened by the A.I.D.S. crisis. Part of

A.I.D.S. DEEPENING AS GAY & LESBIA

The Reverend Jennie Boyd Bull is Pastor of MCC Baltimore, and is the national mission on Faith, Fellowship and Order. She has a special assignment to the NCCC Faith and Order Commission.

that homophobia has been facing the specific question of A.I.D.S. and God's judgement and writing a statement in response (The 1985 FFO brochure, "Is A.I.D.S. God's Judgement? A Christian View of Faith, Hope and Love from Metropolitan Community Church"). The other major change is an increased focus on questions of evil, suffering and death, and an affirmation of resurrection, healing and life in response. There is a profound sense of spiritual strength and of deepening and affirmation of faith and life.

2. What were the theological or faith assumptions operative in FFO's formation and how have these changed in response to A.I.D.S.?

Theological assumptions reflect MCC's context as an ecumenical church with a ministry in the gay and lesbian community. The assumption is that sexuality is a gift of God and homosexuality is not sinful. Other assumptions relate to process: Theology is based in experience as the primary source of revelation, supported by scripture and tradition. Theology is a journey, a process, an evolving. Theology assumes an acceptance of diversity: "Many paths, one faith in Christ."

Changes in these theological assum-

A.I.D.S.: GROWING OUR FAITH AMONG GAY AND LESBIAN CHRISTIANS

C Baltimore and serves as Chair of the UFMCC's Commission on Faith and Order. He has also represented the Universal Fellowship of Faith and Order Commission.

ptions reflect the intensifying effect of A.I.D.S. Theology must be relational, personalized. Worship, prayer and praise are essential in doing theology. The importance of the wholistic health and healing movements has increased as they interact with our faith. There is also a perceived need for increased consensus and affirmation of our faith. Some felt the need for a more concise faith statement. Others focused on "not wasting our time on disagreements" and "getting on with essentials." In one sense, these changes are about living out the experiential, personal focus of the commission.

3. With what understanding or attitude toward the church did FFO begin? What is it now, and what about the A.I.D.S. crisis caused it to change or remain the same?

FFO began with an understanding that "WE are the church, we are the People of God," and is about "articulating the experience of God moving through an oppressed people." The church's ministry is one of reconciliation and healing. The A.I.D.S. crisis has intensified that bond. We have moved beyond a bonding around sexuality to a bonding around mortality, claiming resurrection, healing and life in the face of evil, suffering and death. Facing death has made us take

ourselves more seriously as the church, take more responsibility and activism in our community. Someone said, "We are the experts now; we are healing the physically and spiritually wounded of the other churches." Person after person testified about MCC being sought for its pastoral expertise in this crisis. Out of this comes an increased intensity and focus on the ministry of reconciliation and healing.

4. What church dividing or uniting issues have arisen in your work around A.I.D.S. and how have you sought to address them?

Discussing this question was especially helpful, because some issues had not been clearly raised before as sources of division, and of potential unity as they are confronted and worked through. The interrelation of sin and sickness and their relationship with faith and healing are primary issues that can divide congregations, including everything from blaming and judgemental attitudes to disillusion when faithful prayer does not result in physical healing. Issues of sexual morality are divisive, rooted in internalized homophobia and horizontal violence (taking our self-hatred out on each other). Division between gay men, who are the highest risk group for

A.I.D.S. and lesbians, who are the lowest risk group, is an issue in some congregations, with women especially fearful of A.I.D.S. one more time focusing their issues on men instead of women's concerns. It is also true that women and men are learning to work together and support each other across these differences in ways not possible before. A.I.D.S. is seen as both bringing greater conflict in our churches (in grief, fear and stress reactions) and as bringing greater commitment. The grief reactions of denial and anger bring conflict, but facing death also brings commitment and faith.

Racism is a divisive issue in our congregations and our communities. One person of color called this the Cain syndrome-- "You caused it." As increasing numbers of Black people are diagnosed with A.I.D.S., the lack of outreach in the Black community by MCC congregations is increasingly a stumbling block to ministry, but also an incentive for greater involvement in those communities. Another issue is increased awareness of drug abuse and alcoholism in the gay community and the need to directly address these problems in response to A.I.D.S. As one person pointed out, "More gays die of alcoholism each year than they do of A.I.D.S."

A more specific area of conflict is the negotiation of priorities for ministry in local congregations, as pastors and laity spend increasing energy with A.I.D.S. work-- both in pastoral care, education and advocacy-- and other issues receive less time. One comment was that A.I.D.S. is intensifying the need to deal with ongoing community pastoral issues such as sexuality, drug use, alcoholism, racism, and sexism, but at times can be perceived as taking away from ministry in these areas. Others see A.I.D.S. ministry helping us deal more effectively with all of these issues.

Our responses to these diverse dividing and uniting issues are hopeful. We strongly agree that we face death with deepening faith, and this faith helps us heal the divisions. FFO is responding with resources for education and skills in the process of reconciliation. And this ministry, as with all new ministries, helps our church to grow, in maturity and faith, as well as in numbers.

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

NEW JERSEY EPISCOPALIANS CONSIDER CHURCH APPROVAL OF NON MARITAL SEX

By Jean Caffey Lyles, Religious News Service Associate Editor

Newark, New Jersey (RNS) Episcopal Church parishes in northern New Jersey have been asked to study a controversial report that advocates church approval of sexual relationships for pre-marital, "post-marital" and homosexual couples.

The 600-member convention of the Newark Episcopal Diocese voted to receive a 15-page report on "Changing Patterns of Sexuality and Family Life" for a year-long study by parishes and other groups in the diocese -- which encompasses 130 congregations with a total membership of 55,000.

"It is our conclusion," says the report, "that by suppressing our sexuality and by condemning all sex which occurs outside of traditional marriage, the church has thereby obstructed a vitally important means for persons to know and celebrate their relatedness to God."

The resolution authorizing the study passed easily and with little debate, though an opening hearing a day earlier sparked heated reactions.

Some Episcopalians in the diocese say the document is a long overdue recognition of social reality and the sexual revolution. Others charge that church approval of sex outside marriage goes against divine law and threatens to worsen the spread of A.I.D.S. and other sexually transmitted diseases.

The report is not an official formulation of church policy but rather a study document designed to provoke discussion and help parishes minister to a neglected group of individuals, say diocesan leaders. The Rev. David Hamilton of Morris Plains, New Jersey, a member of the task force, characterizes it as "a pastoral document, not a political one."

Newark Bishop John S. Spong, regarded as one of the most theologically radical leaders in the 2.7 million member Episcopal Church, instigated the project and has been outspoken in urging an end to the church's historic opposition to sex outside of marriage.

Drafters of the report issued here say the church's refusal to accept the living-together arrangements of unmarried

couples has driven sexually active singles away from the church. The document cites recent research that found unmarried couples has driven sexually active singles away from the church. The document cites recent research that found unmarried couples living together were less likely to maintain church membership and to attend services than were their married counterparts.

The report says that all three categories of sexual relationships it discusses-- pre-marital young adults, "post-marital" or never-married older adults, and homosexuals-- are widely represented within the Newark Diocese, and that the church has failed to minister adequately to people in such living arrangements.

The document stresses that for non-marital unions to be blessed by the church, they should be based on "sexual fidelity and not involve promiscuity." Advocating church acceptance of non-marital sex does not imply a belittling of the institution of marriage and lifelong commitment, the task force says. The report also suggests that unmarried couples who live together should conduct their relationship "with sensitivity" to the feelings of their relatives and fellow parishioners.

Church leaders say the report goes further in the direction of approving non-marital sex than any previous Episcopal Church statement. It was produced by a 13-member task force whose work was commissioned by the diocesan convention of 1985. The panel was chaired by

The Rev. Nelson S.T. Thayer, who teaches pastoral theology at Drew University Theological School in Madison, New Jersey.

By issuing the report of its sexuality task force this year, the Newark Diocese-- the Episcopal Church's 13th largest and one of its most urban and liberal-- puts itself in a strategic position to influence the outcome of a similar process at the national level of the 2.9 million member denomination. Bishop Spong is a member of the national church's Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health, which will issue recommendations on human sexuality to the Episcopal General Convention in 1988.

Diocesan leaders say the year-long study in northern New Jersey could pave the way for such actions as writing liturgies to recognize and bless responsible non-marital sexual relationships, including those of homosexuals.

Presiding Bishop Edmond Lee Browning, top official of the Episcopal Church, who was a guest at the convention here, praised Bishop Spong and the Newark Diocese for being "at the cutting edge" of church issues but stopped short of endorsing the report, which he said he had read only superficially.

"There is much in the report we could probably take issue with," noted Bishop Browning, who said he believes Episcopalians need to talk out their disputes on questions of sexuality and "listen to people who are in pain" because they feel rejected by the church.



CARDINAL HAS EXCHANGE IN PRINT WITH GAY CLERIC

WASHINGTON (RNS) -- A rare public discussion between an avowed homosexual member of a religious order and his Bishop, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, has been published in *Commonweal*, a liberal Catholic biweekly magazine.

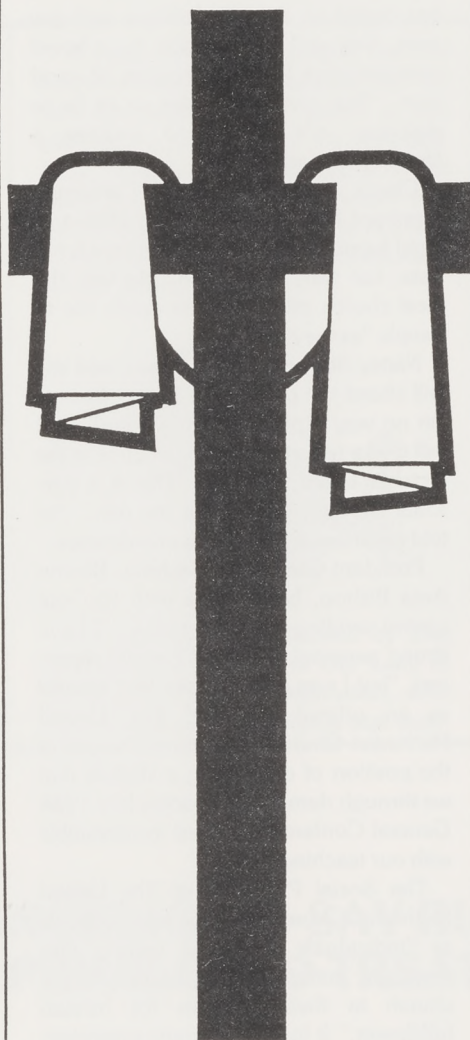
In an open letter to Cardinal Bernardin, Stephen Eldren, a pseudonym, identified himself as a "member of a religious community" who teaches religion in a Catholic school and celebrates his gay identity while being "totally serious about the vow of celibacy" he has taken.

The writer let Cardinal Bernardin know of his reverence for him as bishop and appreciation for his attempts to reach out pastorally to homosexual Catholics. But he also voiced deep distress over the prelate's pivotal opposition to local gay rights legislation in Chicago and his "faulty moral reasoning" that homosexuals can lead moral lives and achieve spiritual fullness only if they refrain from sexual activity.

"I, too, struggle," replied Cardinal Bernardin. He told the writer that he respected the integrity with which he has claimed his homosexual orientation and embraced celibate religious life. The Prelate listed Homophobia as among the "irrational fears and prejudices" of the times that divide people and expressed his hopes to help to stem the alienation currently felt by gay Catholics.

Yet the prelate also offered what he acknowledged may be heard as "hard" words. "To say it simply, our Roman Catholic tradition holds that heterosexual marital intimacy is the only proper context for the genital expression of a human love-making and life-making," he wrote. "The genital expression of a homosexual is precluded."

"I reject your distinction between (sexual) orientation and activity not because it affects what I do, but because it attacks who I am," said Mr. Eldren in anticipation of a distinction drawn in Cardinal Bernardin's letter.



"After years of suffering, doubt, study and prayer, I am convinced that the desires of my heart are of God; they are not morally neutral, they are morally good, equal in dignity to those of my heterosexual brothers and sisters," he explained.

While acknowledging that some homosexual activists would use their freedoms to "flaunt a repugnant lifestyle," Mr. Eldren added that this is no reason to

deny basic rights and human dignity to all homosexuals. And regarding the church's teaching, he asserted that Catholicism's very distinction between homosexual orientation, which is considered morally neutral, and homosexual conduct, which is condemned as evil, "was unknown in the last century."

This shows that church teachings on homosexuality, rather than constant and fixed, have tended to be merely a reflection of the times and of the "prejudices of the heterosexual majority," Mr. Eldren wrote.

Though acknowledging the extent of such prejudices, Cardinal Bernardin nonetheless defended his public opposition to a gay rights measure rejected last year, largely because of his intervention, by Chicago's city council.

The prelate explained that his was a "nuanced" position developed in an attempt to balance his desire to "protect the rights of all citizens" with an obligation to oppose any "public protection or sanctioning of sexual activity or a way of life which compromises the normativeness of heterosexual intimacy."

Patrick Jordan, a *Commonweal* assistant editor, said the gay priest or brother, who asked the editors not to identify him, never sent Cardinal Bernardin a copy of the letter but rather asked *Commonweal* to publish it as an open appeal. Mr. Jordan said the editors were surprised when the prelate agreed to have a response published alongside of Mr. Eldren's, a gesture which the editor described as holding out hope that church authorities would forthrightly deal with the issues.

But, for now, sensitive responses to their plight are not something that homosexual priests and nuns are counting on, as indicated by Mr. Eldren's remark to Cardinal Bernardin: "...if my identity were revealed, you would be pressured to take action against me, and I don't think I owe anything to the lynch mobs which are currently wreaking havoc in the church."

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

UNITED METHODISTS DIVIDED OVER RECONCILIATION PROJECT

NASHVILLE, TN (UMNS) -- In a 37-36 vote, members of the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church decided to forgo sending a representative to a March national meeting of churches who welcome gay men and lesbian women into their communities.

However, some board members donated money to send an unofficial observer to the meeting.

A letter from Mark Bowman of Washington, D.C., asked the board to send a representative to participate in a convocation of "reconciling congregations," to be held in Chicago. Nearly 20 such United Methodist congregations in the United States are described as being committed to "inclusive" ministries, including ministries with lesbians and gay men.

The reconciling congregations project was started in 1984 by Affirmation, the unofficial caucus of United Methodists for lesbian and gay concerns. Mr. Bowman is a coordinator of the Chicago convocation, which will include workshops and forums on such topics as ministries to persons with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (A.I.D.S.) and their families, holy unions, education and gay-lesbian youth issues.

In a lengthy debate, Discipleship members weighed pros and cons of what is construed to be "the message" of their action.

Bishop R. Kern Eutsler, Knoxville, TN said homosexuality is "the most potentially divisive issue in the church," and cautioned his colleagues that the real argument is not whether or not the church should be in ministry with gay men and lesbians. An action to send an official representative "will be perceived as endorsement of a lifestyle that is inimical to the vast majority of United Methodists," he said.

Others agreed that perception was a key issue. Dale Waymire from Madill, Oklahoma, said sending a representative is clearly contrary to the action taken by the church's highest governing body in 1984.

The Rev. Rebecca Parker, Seattle, pastor of a reconciling congregation, said the common perception is that the church has closed its door to lesbians and gay men. She said participation by a board representative is an expression of good faith. "The invitation is for us to be in dialogue, not for us to endorse a lifestyle," she added.

Chuck Jones, Van Nuys, California, dismissed the fear of misinterpretation as a red herring. "The opposite of love is not hate, but fear," he stated. He said the local church must learn to reach out to people "as they are."

Nancy Starnes of New Jersey said she will attend the conference as an observer "in no way representing the board" and will give a report on her experience at the October board meeting. "This is a personal learning experience for me," she told reporters at a later news conference.

President George W. Bashore, Boston Area Bishop, broke a tie with his vote against sending a representative. "I have strong personal feelings," he told reporters, "but I was acting in our best interest as an official body of The United Methodist Church. We cannot be put in the position of condoning a lifestyle that we through democratic process (the 1984 General Conference) called incompatible with our teaching."

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church describe homosexuals as "individuals of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment." It further supports protection of human and civil rights for all persons.

Church law, however, as found in **The Book of Discipline**, describes homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching." Church law prohibits ordination of "self-avowed practicing" homosexuals, as well as official United Methodist agencies' giving money to gay caucuses or groups, or to "promote the acceptance of homosexuality."

In other action, board members heard a report on tentative plans for an interagency consultation on A.I.D.S.. The proposed meeting will be designed to

help local church and conference leaders develop A.I.D.S. ministries, and to encourage community education about the A.I.D.S. crisis. The board also learned that a study resource packet on A.I.D.S. is in the final stages of writing and editing will be sent to all United Methodist pastors this spring.

The General Board of Discipleship, based in Nashville is responsible for providing resources and training for local church leaders, particularly in the areas of worship, stewardship, spiritual life, evangelism, Christian education and lay ministries.

Continued from page 5

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CONSULTATION II COMPLETED

Certainly there were criticisms of the consultation. Some participants felt that both speakers demonstrated bias in favor of homosexuality as a viable and vital expression of love. On the other hand, others remarked that no program of this nature can possibly be free of bias, nor should it pretend to be totally neutral. One person went so far as to assert that there was insufficient open conflict of opinions among participants.

Finally, we left with this question unanswered: Barring reapplication for membership in the NCCC, what direction will future relations take between the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and the National Council of Churches of Christ? Yet in the midst of this and other lingering questions I can make one conclusion: our consultation proved that all the books on sexual ethics can't quite make as deep and rich an impact as face-to-face dialogue with people of varying opinions and persuasions. In the midst of our diversity we could still celebrate our common faith in Jesus Christ.

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

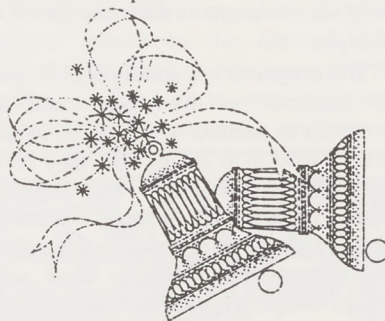
Person With A.I.D.S. And Bride Have Dream Wedding At St. Patrick's Cathedral

New York (RNS) Bitter disappointment turned to joy on Valentine's Day when David Hefner, who is dying of A.I.D.S., and his bride, Maria, renewed their wedding vows in a "dream" ceremony that was canceled more than a month ago by the rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Joined by Cardinal John O'Connor, who at one point welcomed the couple with a kiss for the bride and a handshake for the groom, the Hefners pledged their love and fidelity to one another, repeating the vows they took during a civil ceremony three years ago.

For Mrs. Hefner, 33, a native of Brazil, the ceremony was the fulfillment of a long-held wish for a wedding in her "dream church," St. Patrick's Cathedral. The couple was allowed to marry there after Cardinal O'Connor worked out a compromise that overturned a ruling by Msgr. James F. Rigney, rector of the cathedral.

In early January, the couple was told that the February 14th wedding they had planned with another priest at the cathedral would have to be canceled. Msgr. Rigney told the Hefners that he had made the decision because people with life-threatening diseases such as A.I.D.S. would receive better marriage instruction in their local parish.



The marriage was officiated by The Rev. Gerald McGovern of Our Lady of the Scapular Church in Manhattan, who met with the couple during the past mon-

th for counseling. "This is not just a social event," Father McGovern told those attending the wedding. He said the wedding was a statement of the love and hope "David and Maria have in each other."

"To the rest of us, it is a challenge. They cannot live their love without our support," said the priest.

Mr. Hefner, 38, was diagnosed as having acquired immune deficiency syndrome eight months ago. The disease attacks the body's immune system and breaks down its ability to fight diseases. In an earlier interview with RNS, Mr. Hefner said he told the priest at the cathedral that he believes he contracted the disease in a homosexual relationship before his marriage.

Mrs. Hefner cares for Mr. Hefner full time when he is at home and has stayed with him through four hospitalizations. She so far has tested negative for the A.I.D.S. virus.

EVANGELICALS SAY RULE GIVES PRIVILEGED TREATMENT

ST. PAUL, MINN. (RNS) -- Many evangelical Christians are unhappy with a recent order by Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich which, they say, gives "privileged treatment" to homosexual state employees.

The order says that the state may not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in recruitment, hiring, promotion, tenure and compensation. According to Wayne Olhoft, a former state senator and executive director of the Berean League, a political action group made up of

evangelical Christians, the rule "can result in some dreadful situations."

For example, he said, "pedophiles (people who like to have sex with children) could not be prohibited jobs with children" and "militant and flaunting homosexuals could not be denied a teaching position in state schools, even though they are role models for children."

The Berean League, he said, also will be actively involved in fighting attempts to repeal the state's sodomy law, which has

been declared unconstitutional by a county judge but appealed to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

"If opponents of the sodomy law argue that public morals have changed and that sodomy is no longer licentiousness, the law's supporters can show that sodomy is a danger to public safety because it transmits A.I.D.S.," he said. Mr. Olhoft argued that sodomy also is a "threat to the perpetuation of the race and a violation of the institution of marriage."

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

AFFIRMATION ACCUSES A.I.D.S. BROADCAST OF DISTORTING REALITY

The two "Catch the Spirit" cable TV programs on acquired immune deficiency syndrome have brought more than 250 requests for information, including orders for copies of the U.S. Surgeon General's report for 900 Air Force chaplains, and for materials for use by teachers and pastors in their work.

At the same time, the programs brought a blast from Affirmation, the unofficial caucus of United Methodists for lesbian and gay concerns.

An Affirmation news release called the A.I.D.S. programs "a nearly complete distortion of reality," and said they featured no gay or bisexual men, with or without A.I.D.S. Instead, the release charged, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's comments falsely stereotyped gay men as "victims," unable or unwilling to restrain their sexual activity. The release also said the programs ignored the "disproportionate impact of A.I.D.S. on people of color and the poor."

Morris Floyd, co-spokesperson for Affirmation, said the shows' only redeeming feature was their treatment of Ryan

White, young Indiana A.I.D.S. patient who has fought to remain in the classroom with other students. Ryan's mother, he said, offered "the one unqualified word of grace" by saying no one is to blame for her son's disease.

Nelson Price, head of the Public Media Division of United Methodist Communications, said the programs were produced to focus on the disease, not gay men or drug users.

"While gay men and drug users have been most heavily affected to date, A.I.D.S. is moving at an increasing rate out of these communities," he said. "A.I.D.S. no longer is their disease-- it is society's."

"The programs are about A.I.D.S. and our response as the church and as Christians to persons who have it, regardless of who they are or how they contracted the disease."

Mr. Price quoted program commentator Ken Briggs: "I never once remember Jesus asking the suffering men and women who came to him how they got that way. He healed them with assuran-

ces of God's love. We can do no less."

On one of the programs, Robert W. Lyons, a professor at Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, said lifestyle is not the issue, but "our responsibility... to be the church, to be a healing community in the world. The dimensions of the tragedy give the church the opportunity to be the church... at its best."

The following materials on A.I.D.S. are available from The Service Center, 7820 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45237: the surgeon general's report- 75 cents; the Board of Global Ministries' statement on "The Church as a Healing Community and the A.I.D.S. Crisis"- free and a packet prepared by the National Council of Churches A.I.D.S. Task Force- \$5.

"Catch the Spirit" is a weekly half-hour magazine-format TV program telling stories of people of faith. It is broadcast on CBN Cable Network, American Christian Television System, Alternate View Network, Catholic Telecommunications Network of America and Black Entertainment Television.

METHODIST PAPER TURNS DOWN AD FROM AFFIRMATION

NEW YORK (RNS) -- The **United Methodist Reporter**, a 500,000-circulation weekly based in Dallas, has once again refused to accept an ad from Affirmation, an unofficial caucus of United Methodists espousing lesbian and gay concerns.

A year ago, UMR stopped carrying ads after getting what it described as considerable "negative reaction" from readers and after officials at the paper determined the ads were at variance with the denomination's position on homosexuality.

Most recently, the paper turned down an ad for Affirmation's magazine, **Open Hands**, which carried news of a "reconciling program" being carried out by 17 congregations. The congregations involved in the program have conducted outreach to the homosexual community

and in March will convene in San Francisco for workshops on A.I.D.S. ministries, sexuality education, gay-lesbian youth issues and developing reconciling ministries in the local church.

The Reverend Spurgeon M. Dunnam III, UMR editor and general manager, said the main issue for the newspaper in considering the ads is whether Affirmation is an advocacy group. "We believe they are," he said. "They accept that as one of their roles." Of the material promoted in the most recent ad, Dr. Dunnam said, "If there were any evidence of heterogeneity or different options for persons facing sexual identity crises, we would take a different position."

He denied that refusing the ads constituted censorship, and noted that "we turn down many ads from different organizations because of objectionable

materials in them." The editor recalled that the paper also refused to accept certain ads for bond sales. "We've learned a lot of United Methodists object to their church paper promoting the building of Baptist churches, not because they are against Baptists but because there's a lot of need among Methodists," he said.

In that case, Dr. Dunnam said, the paper had "the right to make what amounts to a discriminatory decision" against Baptists and for United Methodists.

He said that because news stories are not promotional in nature, "an entirely different set of principles" applies when considering news about groups that might represent views counter to the church's teachings.

RNS was unable to reach any Affirmation spokespersons for comment.

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

NEW YORK ARCH DIOCESE BANS GAY MASSES HELD SINCE 1979

New York (RNS) -- An official of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York has banned a Mass for homosexuals that has been held each week at a Manhattan parish since 1979.

Bishop Joseph O'Keefe, Vicar General for the archdiocese, ordered the Masses stopped in a letter to The Rev. Michael Donahue, pastor of the Church of St. Francis Xavier.

The homosexual group, Dignity, has been holding the weekly Mass at St. Francis Xavier, a Jesuit parish. The president of Dignity's New York chapter, Timothy Coughlin, said members were "angry and hurt" by the move. There were plans to hold a demonstration after the final Mass.

"We've done what the archdiocese has failed miserably to do-- to give gay and lesbian Catholics a sacramental life, a sense of community, pastoral care and ministry to persons with A.I.D.S.," Mr. Coughlin said. "In all, we've been true to the gospel."

With Bishop O'Keefe's order, the New York Archdiocese joined the dioceses of Buffalo, New York; Atlanta; Pensacola, Florida; Vancouver, British Columbia; and Brooklyn, New York, in banning Dignity functions on church property. The widespread moves against the group appear related to the October 1986 Vatican document on homosexuality that called on dioceses to stop supporting homosexual groups whose positions dif-

fered from those of the church.

The Rev. Joseph Novak, provincial of the Jesuit order's New York region stated, "It is sad and unfortunate that the celebration of the Eucharist, which is intended to be a source and sign of unity within the Christian community, has become an occasion of disunity."

Dignity has 5,000 members nationwide in 100 chapters and welcomes sexually active homosexuals. Mr. Coughlin said the New York chapter would continue holding weekly Mass at an alternative location not on archdiocesan property. It was unclear whether the archdiocese would ban priests from celebrating Masses held under those conditions.



DUTCH COURT AQUITS CARDINAL OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GAYS

By Dirk Visser, Religious News Service

Utrecht, Netherlands (RNS)-- Cardinal Adrianus Simonis, archbishop of Utrecht, was acquitted in court of a charge of promoting discrimination against homosexuals.

The judge ruled that the Dutch Association for the Integration of Homosexuality was incorrect in asserting that Roman Catholic doctrine on homosexuality is discriminatory. The court also said that as primate of the church in the Netherlands, Cardinal Simonis has the right under civil law to propagate the church's viewpoints.

In a radio interview, Cardinal Simonis had explained the Vatican's October

document on pastoral care for homosexuals by making a distinction between homosexual inclination, which the church accepts, and homosexual practice, which it forbids. He called homosexuality a disorder and upheld the right of a Catholic to refuse to rent a room to a homosexual person.

These remarks provoked a storm of protest in the Netherlands. The Dutch gay movement asked the court for a summary judgement ordering Cardinal Simonis to apologize and forbidding him from making further discriminatory remarks about homosexuals.

But the judge noted that the cardinal

did not order landlords not to rent rooms to homosexuals but showed understanding of the problems of conscience such a landlord would face.

In a brief statement following his acquittal Cardinal Simonis said he only wanted to explain the doctrine of the church without insulting anybody. He said he regrets that certain persons felt hurt by his remarks.

The gay movement said the decision demonstrated the need for a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. "As long as the judge cannot forbid discriminating remarks on homosexuals, we are still outlawed," the group said.

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The police weren't among the 13 people at that first service, but they showed up some time later, when the church had outgrown Perry's living room and was worshipping at the Huntington Park Women's Club.

"One day, the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) showed up -- out of their jurisdiction," he recalls. "Two police officers in plainclothes. They came in and immediately went to the bathroom, the toilet, to hang around. I asked the biggest, burliest usher there to go throw them out, and to tell them either to come in for service or get out of the building -- I didn't care which -- but to get out of the toilet. They sheepishly got out of the toilet and left."

Backing down from confrontations isn't part of Perry's *modus operandi*, although starting confrontations in a just cause is. No course on modern gay history is complete without his life story, as detailed in his 1972 autobiography *The Lord Is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay*. Born in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1940, Perry became a Pentecostal preacher when he was 13. He married at 18 and fathered two sons, trying to suppress the homosexuality he had been aware of from the age of five, when "Tarzan turned me on." At 23, Perry came out fully, giving up his family and career in the process. He had a difficult time, including a suicide attempt, between finding out who he was and what he was to do about it.

Perry cites two incidents as central to his political awakening. The first was in 1968.

"My gay activism started when a friend of mine was arrested in a gay bar in Los Angeles," he relates. "That sparked the birth of MCC, plus it sparked my attention to the way police treated gay people. When my date and a friend of ours were arrested for 'lewd and lascivious conduct,' which no longer is even a law in California, about ten of us loaded up into cars, led by Lee Glaze, the owner of the old Patch, which was a gay bar in Los Angeles. He got up in his bar after the arrests were made and asked if there was a florist there. He bought all the flowers, loaded down these cars with them..."

"It was crazy back then, it wasn't politically correct, but it worked. We swept into the police station and Lee said, 'We're here to get our sisters out of jail.' The police officer asked, 'Who are your

sisters?' and he said 'Tony Valdez and Bill Hastings.'

"They were scared. It was the first time the police did not know how to react. They were used to faggots. They were used to queers. They were used to pan-sies."

"That started me, and one thing led to another -- and continues on. It hasn't stopped yet."

Another incident, the following year, pushed more of Perry's buttons.

"We had a gay brother who was beaten to death in our city and I went to the inquest, and that really was where I consciously became politically active. He had been beaten to death by the police, in an old hotel in downtown Los Angeles where males used to go for impersonal sex. Supposedly, he fell out onto the freeway being taken to the hospital. The police claimed he kicked the door open and fell onto the Hollywood Freeway."

The verdict: justifiable homicide.

"I've never gotten over that, listening to that story," Perry says, visibly moved as he repeats it. "And I thought, God, there but for the grace of God goes Troy Perry."



"That was on Good Friday, 1969. That's when I got up in my church and said, 'We have to see the stone of ignorance rolled away from the tomb of truth, and let truth spring forth.'"

A few weeks later, Perry led pickets for three days outside the Los Angeles office of States Steamship Lines, to protest their employment policy after they had fired a man in San Francisco for being gay.

In protesting the "Gestapo" tactics of the LAPD, Perry eventually led a demonstration outside the home of Chief Ed Davis, now a state senator whose attitude toward gays has changed.

"And I do support Ed Davis," Perry says now, "of all the people running from his district, one of our most conservative districts. Ed has proved to be a friend as time has gone by."

Perry also crusaded for gay rights legislation in California and Los Angeles. To this end, he undertook his first public fast, which lasted ten days, in June 1970.

"I would fast in front of the Federal Building. I discovered one day that that was federal ground and LAPD couldn't come on and arrest me. It would take a federal marshal to arrest me, and we learned how to deal with them -- you just call them up and tell them you're going to do it. You never ask permission, I learned a long time ago."

"It was never fun to fast," he adds. "It hurts a lot, but it reminds you of why you're there. Don't ever let anybody tell you your stomach quits hurting after three days. That's a lie of the devil."

Perry's longest fast was 16 days, to raise money to fight California's notorious Briggs Initiative in 1978.

"I announced that I wouldn't eat again until I raised \$100,000 seed money. The Lord had spoken to my heart and told me this was a *real* moral issue -- not the way John Briggs and Anita Bryant were trying to portray it -- and let me know what I was to do. One the 16th day of my fast -- we went over the top with \$104,000."

This technique may sound dangerously close to Oral Roberts's "God will call me home," extortion, but Perry points out the significant difference.

"I said this is a matter of morals. I said, people have to know how serious we are, we who are part of the gay and lesbian community. I refuse to eat again. If it means my death, it means my death. That's not the way Oral did it. Mr. Roberts said God told him 'I'll kill you if you don't raise this money.' God didn't tell me that. This was my offering."

"I knew I would receive the money. I didn't know how long it would take, but I knew with all my heart that the gay community and our heterosexual friends would respond."

Columnist Abigail van Buren and actress Jane Fonda were among the "Friends of Troy Perry" who took out full-page ads encouraging donations.

In 1977, Perry was one of 14 lesbians and gay men invited to the White House to discuss our political agenda with Jimmy Carter's assistant, Midge Costanza.



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Seeing him on television that night resolved the last doubt any of his Southern family had about his homosexuality, he says, and when he visited them four months later, "They threw barbeques and fish fries all over the woods. It was like, if I was good enough for the President, I must be all right."

It's been hard to name a significant event in the gay movement Perry has not been involved in. Talk-show host Phil Donahue has had him on eight times, to discuss various issues.

"He and I know each other quite well," Perry says. "He and his wife, Marlo Thomas, are recipients of our Human Rights award from MCC this year. We feel like they have done more for gay rights -- in the media -- than any person. They've never backed away from the issue and have always been extremely positive."

The award ceremony will come during UFMCC's biennial general conference, which will be held July 19-26 in the Deauville, the Miami Beach hotel where Perry led a "lay-in" during the 1972 Democratic National Convention, to get an audience with the just-nominated George McGovern. He learned later that McGovern had been on the way to speak to him when he left.

Besides the conference, which he expects to be "low-keyed," Perry is involved in organizing the October 11 National March on Washington.

"I feel like we've got to get to Washington, D.C.," he says. "It is time for us to have a much more visible march than we had the last time. I'm the one who penned the phrase, 'For love and for life, we're not going back.' I based it on a scripture, 'Our God who has given us life, also gives us liberty.'"

"The day the Supreme Court ruled that we didn't have any rights, that the states could do anything they wanted to against us, I was never so irritated in my life. That's when I said, 'It is now time for another massive demonstration, America.' And I found there were other people feeling just the same way I was."

While he can sing the gospel with the best of them, Perry isn't worried about a "Perrygate" sex scandal rocking the UFMCC. At the suggestion that we might expose his sex life, he laughs heartily. Unlike other celebrated preachers, who throw stones from their glass houses and

crystal cathedrals, Perry's sex life is, as he says, "an open book."

"I don't hide lots. I don't do anything that I feel is sin. That's the difference between me and Jim Bakker. I believe that sex is a part of the wholeness of a human being. They're sex-obsessed. I enjoy that part of me that was created, which we call human sexuality, in the best sort of way, so I have no regrets."

The ongoing televangelist scandals, which have come to be known as "Pearlygate," are no surprise to Perry.

"I've always said preachers are as human as anyone else. Coming from my old Pentecostal background, I could guarantee that if I heard of a preacher who did a series of sermons on adultery, week in and week out for several weekends, he was having intercourse with the piano player and they were getting ready to run off together."

With the initial mission of preaching that God loves gays too, UFMCC has never formulated a rigid moral code that its leaders couldn't live up to better than its followers. Instead, an unwritten doctrine of honest and responsible sexuality has sustained the church, even in the age of AIDS, when the sense of responsibility

has heightened.

"You are your brother's keeper, you are your sister's keeper, you've got to help each other," Perry says. "Some gay people, when AIDS first started, felt like they could never 'be into safe sex' -- it just wouldn't work for them. They weren't used to condoms. We've all discovered they're wonderful, erotic -- sex has not stopped at all. You just don't exchange body fluids."

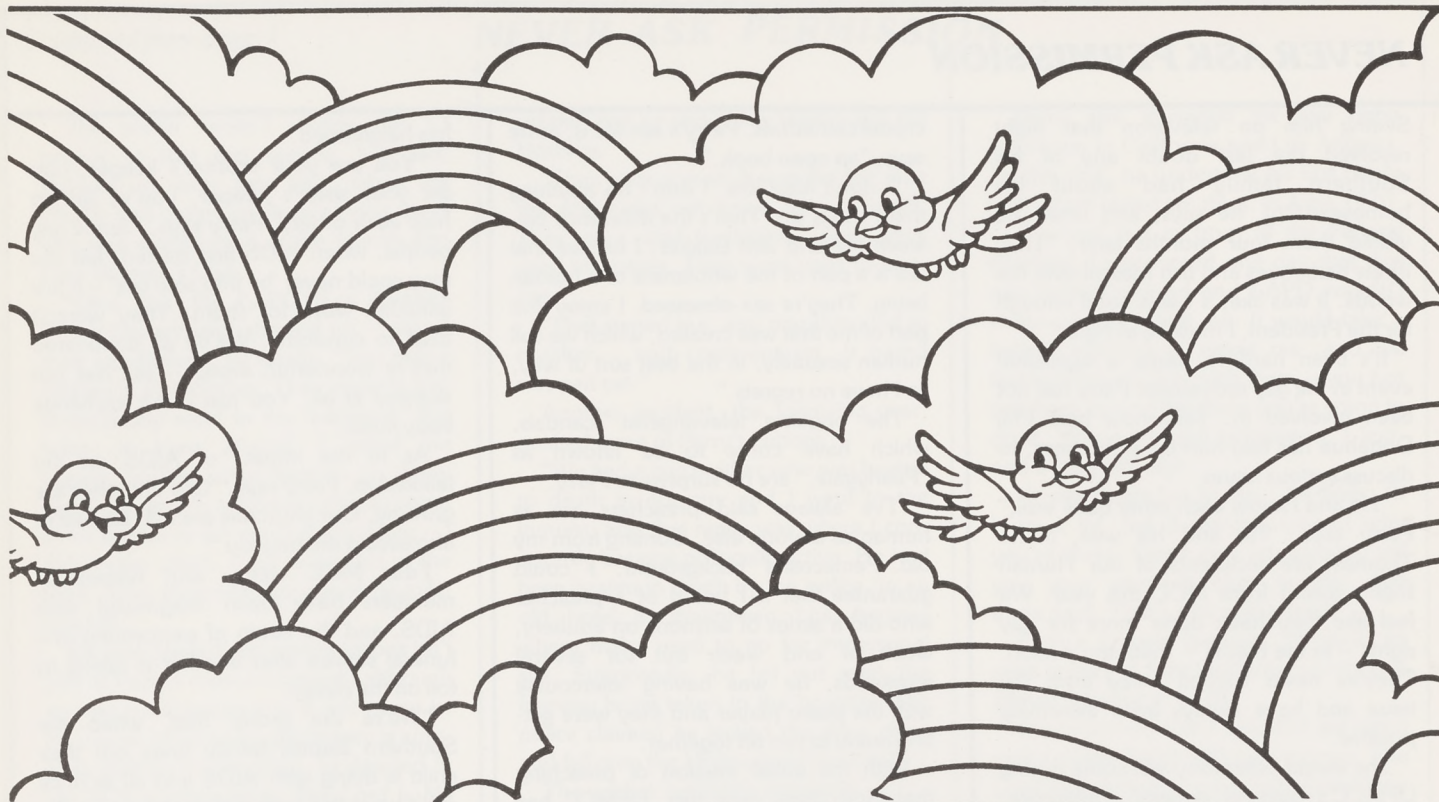
As to the impact of AIDS on the fellowship, Perry says, "Our churches are growing. Our churches are full. But we're also seeing the tragedy."

Four MCC clergy and numerous members have been diagnosed with AIDS, and the strain of performing one funeral service after another is taking its toll on the clergy.

"We're the group that, when the Southern Baptist family finds out their child is dying with AIDS and all at once can't have the body shipped back to the local Baptist church, then someone tells them about MCC and we end up performing the funeral for the family. A lot of them are people we don't know, who are not a part of MCC. But that's what the Christian church is called to do, too."

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We're gearing up for that, because I feel we have to be in this for the duration."

One full day of this summer's biennial conference will be devoted, as it was in 1985, to AIDS. Churches in remote areas learn a lot from their big city siblings in these sessions.

While it's sometimes hard to separate Perry's feelings from UFMCC policy, he is personally opposed to the test for antibodies to HIV, the so-called "AIDS virus."

"I've refused to take the test. I tell all my friends, 'I'll take the test the day they have the treatment.' I just encourage my friends not to do it. They don't need that extra stress on their lives.

"I presume we've all been exposed to the virus. I just take the attitude every gay male has been exposed to the virus. But I refuse to go down there and have my name in some computer somewhere. They will drag me away to give me any kind of test."

The possibility that Great Britain and other countries will require testing before granting visas is a concern to this head of an international organization.

"Luckily," Perry says, "I have churches in Great Britain who can carry the fight on in Great Britain. The gays in those

countries are going to have to fight that battle for us, just as we have to fight it here."

Perry describes three areas of sexual expression he has preached against since the beginning of MCC.

"Number one was: I believe that rape is a sin. I believe forcing yourself on someone who doesn't want your attention is absolutely wrong. The second was: I had problems with people who would go out in broad daylight and have intercourse in the street. I've always felt that was not appropriate. The third area was sex with children. I have problems with adults who go to bed with seven-, eight-, and nine year old kids. I just do."

MCC does not condone adultery, but Perry doesn't define the word quite the way some religious leaders do.

"That's the breaking of vows you make to another human being," he explains. "If you have an open relationship and you're honest about that and you've both agreed to that, that's fine and dandy. If you don't, and you lie about it and run around, then you're as bad as our enemies."

Of those "enemies," Perry has more sympathy than one might expect for the central couple in Pearlygate.

"I happen to like Jim and Tammy Bakker," he says. "I thought it took a lot of guts for her to say she had been hooked on prescription drugs for 17 years. I don't see how people can discount their ministry. They did do good. Jim Bakker said this happened, asked forgiveness for it, and I thought it was the work of the Christian church to forgive. I get tired of 'Christian' groups who want people to wallow in the dirt in the process of asking forgiveness. Jesus never said that."

"In my old denomination, if you committed adultery you couldn't come back in the ministry for seven years. If you were a homosexual, you couldn't come back for life. I asked them to show me that in Scripture, and of course they couldn't -- and they can't. That's why it's ridiculous.

"I think if Jim and Tammy have got any sense at all, they'll move back in, take over their organization, and do it outside the Assemblies of God -- go ahead and do what they've been doing best, have their talk show.

"They had just had a clergyperson from MCC on their show," Perry adds. "They were attacked for that. They had Rev. Steve Pieters, who is a person with



AIDS. He was on their show as an openly gay person, as a clergyperson from UF-MCC. Tammy did the interview and then ended it with crying -- as she does sometimes -- and telling people that Christians had a bad habit of talking about things they didn't understand, and calling for concern for people who are coming down with AIDS and for prayer and for research.

"So there were lots of things they were doing that were not typical of Pentecostals -- people like Jimmy Swaggart, who is the hatefulest preacher in the big, wide world. I mean, he never smiles on his show. It's like everything is sin, everything is a drudge. He's wanted Bakker removed for some time, and finally got his excuse."

As for Jerry Falwell taking over the PTL organization, "I couldn't believe that!" Perry roars. "That to me said that Bakker was trying to keep the Assemblies of God, his Pentecostal denomination, from taking over. He named a Baptist because he knew the Baptists and the Pentecostals don't get along, and that they will fight back in to take over his ministry, if that happens."

Pope John Paul II is high on the gay "enemies list" these days, especially since last Vatican letter, which has led to pressure on U.S. Catholic churches to deny worship space to Dignity, the organization of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends.

"I took the time to read the document

from Rome," Perry says. "I'm very saddened by it.

"We're now moving to make our church property available to Dignity groups -- where we own property -- all over the nation. We are meeting with Dignity in Miami this summer, at the General Conference of our denomination. They're holding their conference in the same city at the same time, and on the Saturday (July 25), we're all planning a gigantic worship service together. We say, 'They'll know we are Christians by our love,' and we want to show them that ecumenical relations are possible, at least in the gay and lesbian community."

There is no indication of gay Catholics shifting their affiliation from Dignity to MCC in response to the Vatican letter, and Perry wouldn't encourage them to. He thinks some unaffiliated people may be turned off from associating with a Catholic group and might join MCC instead, but "There are hundreds of thousands of gay Catholics who would never feel comfortable in any Protestant church group, and they would envision MCC as being that. So it's very important that the work of Dignity goes on."

Perry puts the "unofficial" tally of Metropolitan Community Churches worldwide at 267, including such "special works" as campus and prison ministries, the latter aided by the recent out-of-court settlement of the denomination's suit against the federal government for access to prisons.

"(U.S. Attorney General Edwin) Meese decided to settle out of court," Perry says, "and ordered the (federal) prison system to treat MCC like every other church group."

Financially, Perry states, "We're now the largest organization touching the lives of gays and lesbians in the world. There is no organization larger than MCC -- nowhere else. We've researched this to death. There are groups that receive money from federal funding and things like that, but on a basis of people contributing to an organization, we're now raising more money than anybody. Our membership is contributing approximately \$6 million a year now.

"We now own about \$15 million worth of property. We're preparing at our General Conference to talk about a Fellowship Headquarters. But it'll be more than office buildings. I have a real vision. It's time for a memorial to those people who helped our movement get to where it's at, both in and out of MCC. I want a memorial built -- a place of remembrance, I call it -- as well as a headquarter building and a new school. It will probably cost around five to eight million dollars."

Rev. Troy D. Perry appears to be in good spirits as UFMCC, coming from a position of strength and growth, prepares for its 13th international conference, July 19-26, at the Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach, with the bold theme: "Perfect Love Will Cast Out All Fear."

PERFECT LOVE



CASTS OUT ALL FEAR

1-JOHN 4:18



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